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J45 (MAJ NICHOLLS)

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SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Aftermath of Katrina, U.S. Supreme
Court; Dhaka

Summary: Independent English "Daily Star" says that the
Katrina tragedy has laid bare the poverty in the U.S. and
the government inaction.

On the death of Chief Justice Rehnquist, Independent English
"New Age" says that this provides President Bush an
opportunity to leave behind a lasting legacy through Supreme
Court appointments which may determine the course of the
nation for a long time.

[1](#). Aftermath of Katrina

"Katrina Fallout Issues: Tragedy Compounded by Governance
Failure"
English language newspaper "Daily Star" editorially comments
(9/8):

The destruction of the city of New Orleans by Hurricane
Katrina and the accompanying massive loss of life has been
nothing short of mind-boggling. New Orleans lies in ruins.
It needs to be totally evacuated, and months will be needed
before it is even habitable again. The cost of
reconstruction is estimated to top \$100 billion. Even more
chillingly, as the authorities go door to door and street to
street to recover corpses, the death toll has climbed into
the thousands, and may reach as high as 10,000, over three
times the toll of 9/11.

Disaster relief was made a low priority by the current
administration. Money that was needed to shore up levees and
provide emergency relief was diverted to tax cuts for the
wealthy, and President Bush's selection of a crony with zero
relevant experience to run the agency is evidence of his
indifference to its mission.

The hurricane has also laid bare the fact of poverty in the
US and its effects. Most of the victims who were trapped in
the city could not leave. They had no money, no transport,
and nowhere to go. Plans to evacuate them before the city
flooded, and to rescue them after, were incomplete and
inefficient. The heavily African-American make-up of the
victims only serves to highlight the racial underpinnings of
such poverty. It was mostly poor blacks who were left behind
and not taken care of by the government.

The administration is already in furious damage control,
attempting to minimize the political fall-out with an
intensity it conspicuously didn't bring to the actual
crisis. President Bush's policies, his inaction, and his
self-serving statements that "no one could have anticipated"
the devastation, all underline how important it is that
there must be a true investigation to get to the bottom of
how such a catastrophe could have occurred. The dead and
dispossessed deserve more than a 9/11 Commission style white-
wash that holds no one accountable.

In Bangladesh, we understand only too well the destructive
power of nature, and our hearts and prayers must go out to
America in its hour of need. The Bangladesh government has
pledged to send \$1 million, which we applaud as a token of
gesture, and it is indeed poignant to think that the US
could perhaps have benefited in terms of logistical planning
and rescue and relief operations from the lessons that we
have learned through hard experience.

[2](#). U.S. Supreme Court

"President Bush's Legacy"
Independent English language newspaper "New Age" editorially
comments 9/8):

Some pretty interesting things have been happening in
America. Of course, with much of the world glued to news of
Hurricane Katrina, not many may have noticed what has been
occurring elsewhere in the United States. We refer to the
recent death of Supreme Court Chief Justice William
Rehnquist. The long serving justice died a few days ago of
cancer and thereby gave President George W. Bush a unique

opportunity of filling two empty positions on the court. When a few months ago Justice Sandra Day O' Connor decided to retire from her position, the president nominated John Roberts to take her place. The new associate justice-designate was almost through his confirmation process in the Senate when Chief Justice Rehnquist died. President Bush lost little time in advancing the case for Roberts a little further through then naming him to succeed Rehnquist rather than O'Connor.

The stage is therefore set for a fresh new battle. Democrats in the Senate are already giving out every indication that Roberts will now face tougher scrutiny since he now means to preside over the Supreme Court. While all this fresh new battle is joined by both Republican and Democrats, President Bush will be looking for a new person to actually replace Justice O'Connor and clearly he will be angling for someone who will strengthen the conservative hold on the highest judiciary in the country.

In the United States, the shape and complexion of the Supreme Court are what decide the long-term political and social future of the country. Mr. Bush, despite his failings in leadership (the most recent of which has been his inability to rally the country on the Hurricane Katrina issue), now finds himself in the unique position of leaving a lasting legacy through the instrument of the Supreme Court. For a man to whom a right-wing ideology matters, the two openings on the bench are a chance that will be utilized to the fullest extent. One can therefore rest assured that this president of the United States, for all his intellectual limitations and controversial foreign policy, will yet cast a long shadow on the Supreme Court. A hint of how deep the shadow will be can be assessed when the president names the successor to Justice O'Connor.

Chammas